

LINCOLN

AS THE SOUTH SHOULD KNOW HIM

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Can the man who suffered his lieutenant, Sherman, to ruthlessly devastate twice as much Southern territory as all Belgium combined be the Southern ideal?

Can the man whose life work was to tear from the Declaration of Independence its immortal part, its very soul, "That governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," be the American ideal, if the truth is looked full in the face?

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In a blaze of burning roof-trees, under clouds of smoke and flame,
Sprang a new word into being, from a stern and dreaded name;
Gaunt and grim and like a specter rose that word before the world,
From a land of bloom and beauty into ruin rudely hurled,
From a people scourged by exile, from a city ostracized,
Pallas-like it sprang to being—and that word is “Shermanized.”

L. VIRGINIA FRENCH.

LINCOLN, AS THE SOUTH SHOULD KNOW HIM

What thick hides and short memories we Southern folk have, and how inconsistent we are! We call down anathema on the Kaiser's head for the devastation of Belgium; in almost the same breath we raise pæans to Lincoln, who was responsible for the far more causeless and ruthless devastation of the South by Sherman—Sherman, who waged war so atrocious that its very author could find no name on earth to match, but had to go down below to get it. Well might he, with Milton's Satan, say:

“Where I am is hell.”

Satan lit its fires in his own breast; Sherman in the desolated homes of war, made widows and orphans.

If Belgium had its Louvain and Antwerp, so also had the South its Columbia, its Atlanta, its Savannah, its Charleston.

Countless Belgium homes have been burned. But there has been nothing like systematic, utter destruction. The Kaiser, outnumbered, hard beset, the very existence of his country in imminent peril, has increased his slender store of food by robbing Belgium, electing to starve foe rather than friend. (This was written in January, 1915.) That vengeance, not necessity, prompted the black path that Sherman cut through the South, the evidence is full and damning. On December 18, 1864, General Halleck, Chief of Staff to President Lincoln, and necessarily in close touch with him, writes to Sherman as follows: “Should you capture Charleston, I hope by some accident the place will be destroyed. And if a little salt can be sown on its site, it may prevent the future growth of nullification and secession.” Sherman, on the 24th, answers as follows: “I will bear in mind your hint as to Charleston, and do not think that ‘salt’ will be necessary. When I move, the Fifteenth Corps will be on the right of the right wing, and their position will naturally bring them into Charleston first; and if you have watched the history of that corps you will have remarked that they do their work pretty well. The truth is, the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance on South Carolina.”

One of Wheeler's scouts, observing Sherman's advance, reported that during one night, and from one point, he counted over one hundred burning homes. And as to the looting, a letter written by a Federal officer, and found at Camden, S. C., after the army passed, and given in the *Southern Woman's Magazine*, runs as follows: "We have had a glorious time in this State. The chivalry have been stripped of most of their valuables. Gold watches, silver pitchers, cups, spoons, forks, etc., are as common in camp as blackberries. Of rings, earrings, and breastpins I have a quart. I am not joking—I have at least a quart of jewelry for you and the girls, and some A1 diamond pins and rings among them. Don't show this letter out of the family."

Sherman long denied burning Columbia, in the most solemn manner calling his God to witness as to his truthfulness. When, after the overwhelming evidence that he did burn it was adduced, he unblushingly admitted the fact, and that he had lied on Wade Hampton with the purpose of rendering him unpopular, and thereby weakening his cause. But a mere lie shines white against the black ground of Sherman's character.

I could pile up a mountain of facts as damning as those given. But what boots it to prove again what too long ago has been proven—that not since Attila, "The Scourge of God," cut his black swath across Europe fifteen hundred years ago has Sherman's "March to the Sea" had its fellow.

The conversion of the Shenandoah region into a waste so complete that, in Sheridan's own words, a crow flying over it would have had to carry his rations—a destruction not only of every vestige of food, of all animals and fowls, but also of every implement that could be used to make or prepare more food, every millstone, wagon, plow, rake, and harrow, down to the flower-hoes of the women, may have been a military necessity, for this lovely valley was, in some measure, the granary of Lee's army.

The necessities of war demanded that Sherman live off the country he traversed. Those elastic necessities may have been stretched to demand that he destroy even the pitiful stint of food that the South had left; that he wrest the last morsel from the mouth of the mother and babe, lest, perchance, some crumb thereof reach and nourish the men at the front. But what necessity of war, except that brand that Sherman fathered and sponsored, demanded that the torch follow the pillager, that every home be burned, and famishing mother and babe be turned out in midwinter to die of cold and exposure?

"But didn't 'Sherman's March' shorten the war; didn't it shake Lee's lines around Petersburg when his men knew that fire and rapine were in their homes?" is sometimes asked. Doubtless. And it might have shaken them all the more had wives and babes been burnt in these homes rather than left to starve in their ruins. It might have been not only more effective but more merciful. But there are abysmal depths of

atrocities from which even the "hired assassin" recoils—that is, unless he belongs to the Attilas, Alvas, and Shermans. There are rules of civilized warfare which the soldier in every extremity must observe or else have heaped upon him the execration of mankind.

The whole world shudders at the robbery and partial ruin of only a part of Belgium. Sherman devastated an area nearly twice as great as the whole of Belgium, and devastated it utterly, leaving only blackened chimneys and starving women and children in his wake. That his hell was only some sixty miles wide was owing to no lack of Satanic ferocity on his part. It would have been much wider had not Wheeler, with his handful of horse, hung close to Sherman's flanks, with a quick halter for every marauder he caught in the act. Sherman's little finger was heavier than the whole martial fist of the Kaiser. Belgium was a battle-ground—the largest and fiercest that even blood-soaked Old Mother Earth ever saw. But it took five million men five months to work wreck and ruin. Sherman did it overnight with sixty thousand. The Kaiser found at least a potential sniper in every window; his every step was a battle. Sherman had only a light screen of cavalry to brush aside, and not always even that.

That there was less starvation in Sherman's path than the Kaiser's—though many a high-born Southern lady kept life in her children for the time with the waste corn slobbered from the mouths of the Federal cavalry and artillery horses—was because the South was large and far less densely populated than Belgium, and that the victims sought shelter in the unravaged regions which Wheeler had saved.

Then there is a hideous chapter in this black book that never has and never will be written—so hideous that even the South has been fain to draw over it the curtain of obivion. I mean the violence that Southern women suffered at the hands of Sherman's ruffians. It is a well-known fact, and by none better known than by military men themselves, that men herded in camps, removed from the restraints of home, rapidly tend to relapse towards barbarism, and that only the iron hand of discipline can hold them in check. Relax that discipline in one respect, sanction the perpetration of one crime, and all crimes, especially the crime against woman, follows as a natural sequence.

No one who lived in or near Sherman's path in Georgia, South Carolina, or even in this State, after the war was over and the troops marching for disbandment in Washington, can lack knowledge of cases that came to light, despite every effort of the hapless victims themselves to hide them. To recall only the cases which abide with me most vividly, that came practically under my own observation, or that I had first-hand knowledge of—the beautiful girl to whose rescue came one of Wheeler's troopers, and who, seized and used as a shield by the ruffian who had abused her, in her agony begged the trooper to shoot through her body and kill him; but by a dexterous movement the brute was killed over her shoulder.

The cottage, with its rose-covered porch, in which lived the young widow and her three daughters, all noted for their beauty and refinement, at whose door a band of Federal troopers drew rein at dusk—the screams and sobs that all the live-long night the neighbors heard, but dared not stir—the tomblike aspect of the cottage, with no smoke from the chimneys, no sign of life, for days and days afterwards—the deep grave of forgetfulness that the sorrowing neighborhood dug for the whole horrible affair, where it rests this day. The very first offense of a negro against a white woman that I ever heard of was committed in this neighborhood, in April, 1865, by one who had been under Sherman's tutelage. What, indeed, was the saturnalia of crime against Southern woman for a generation afterwards but the aftermath, the legacy, of that foulest blot on American history—Sherman's vaunted "March to the Sea"?

It is a maxim of war, as it is of common sense, that the higher the rank the greater the fame or blame for any given act. In every crime that sprang from this lack of discipline—and no one can question that practically all did so spring—the men higher up, who invited the crime by lowering the bars of discipline, were worse criminals than the perpetrators themselves. Above the perpetrator stood the commander of the army, Sherman; above Sherman stood the commander-in-chief of all the Federal armies, Abraham Lincoln. If Lincoln ever discountenanced Sherman and his methods, he never gave word to it, and he was a man of many words.

George III., whom we were reared to execrate next to Satan, and Lincoln, whom our children are being reared to venerate almost next to God, both sent armies to invade the South, the one in the benighted eighteenth, the other in the enlightened nineteenth century. Surely the charter and conduct of the two commanders put at the head of these invading armies must be some indication of the animus of those two men towards the South. I quote first from Cornwallis's order book, various dates of January, February, and March, 1781, showing him to have been more careful to shield noncombatants from the pettiest theft than Sherman was to save them from the blackest crimes: "It is needless to point out to officers the necessity of preserving the strictest discipline and of preventing the oppressed people from suffering by the hands of those from whom they were taught to look for protection. Lord Cornwallis is highly displeased that several houses have been set on fire today during the march—a disgrace to the army—and he will punish with the utmost severity any person or persons found guilty of committing so disgraceful an outrage. His lordship requests that the commanding officers of the corps will endeavor to find the persons who set fire to the houses this day." "Great complaints have been made of negroes straggling, plundering, and using violence. No negroes shall be suffered to carry arms. Provost marshal has orders to shoot on the spot any negro who may offend against these regulations." "Any officer who looks on and does not do his utmost to prevent shameful

marauding will be considered in a more criminal light than the person who committed these scandalous crimes." "A woman having been robbed of a watch, a black silk handkerchief, a gallon of peach brandy, and a shirt, and, by description, by a soldier of the Guard, every man's kit is to be immediately examined." "All foraging parties will give receipts for the supplies taken by them." In some instance two staff officers were actually captured because they had remained behind to pay for supplies requisitioned for the invading army.

"A watch found by the regiment of BOSE. The owner may have same from adjutant on proving property." "Immediate inspection of the clothing in possession of the women is to be made. Their clothing to be regularly examined at proper intervals hereafter, and every article found in addition thereto burned at the head of the company. Officers are ordered to make this examination at such times so as to prevent the women (supposed to be the source of this infamous plundering) from evading the purport of the order."

(Sherman's majors general brought their harlots along, loaded them with stolen jewelry, and desecrated Southern homes with them overnight before applying the torch next morning.)

I might quote at great length the British commander's restraining words and cite instances of stronger measures, but will cite only one.

After Cornwallis's virtual defeat at Guilford he retreated to Wilmington, then passed northward through the State on the way to his doom at Yorktown. Even if policy rather than principle had influenced him earlier in the campaign, it could have had little weight with him then, for, as he well knew, the game was lost. While at Halifax tidings reached him that a woman had suffered at the hands of Tarleton's troopers forming his advance guard. Taking a body-guard of only one dragoon, Cornwallis spurred forward and overtook Tarleton near the present town of Garysburg. The whole command was halted till witnesses could be brought up. It was then dismounted, lined up, the two offenders, one a sergeant, identified, tried by drumhead courtmartial, and strung up to the nearest tree.

So much for the army that the tyrant, George III., sent. Eighty-four years later the superman, Lincoln, sent an army along much the same track. The object of both armies was to subdue the invaded region and win it back to their respective governments.

The tyrant of the eighteenth century, as we have seen, sought to subdue by waging honorable warfare against combatants and protecting the person and property of noncombatants.

And the superman? To devastate and utterly ruin every inch of territory that the far-flung wings of his great army could compass, a compass limited only by the activity of the Confederate cavalry on its flanks.

Even then, if in the conflict of the strong North against the weak South such cruel measures were necessary, if the occasion demanded

that every Southern woman and child that could be reached be deprived of food, clothing, and shelter, and turned out in midwinter, it does seem that this superman would have sent the sanest and humanest of all his lieutenants to accomplish this fell work—would have tempered wrath with mercy. Instead, he sent Sherman, the demoniac. Charity impels me to dub him only demoniac, possessed of a demon, rather than to believe one of my own species could be demon outright. Listen at his ravings and judge. They are taken at random from his orders and reports, and whole pages could be filled with such venomous utterances:

"As to the Kentucky secessionists, I hope General Burbridge will send them to Dry Tortugas [a sandy island of insufferable heat and glare south of Florida]—men, women, and children—and encourage a new breed."

"Hang a few secessionists now and then."

"I am going into the very bowels of the Confederacy, and propose to leave a trail that will be recognized for fifty years."

"I propose to sally forth to ruin Georgia, and expect to leave a hole that will be hard to mend."

"I am perfecting arrangements to push into Georgia and make desolation everywhere." "I will make Georgia howl."

"Arrest all people, male and female, and let them foot it into Marietta. Let them take their children and clothing, provided they have means of hauling them." (Lacking these means, the only inference is that both were to be left behind.)

"I propose to march, leaving a patch of desolation behind."

"I will see that Atlanta is utterly ruined."

And like master like man. Small wonder that Sherman's underlings filled every item down the long, black list of crime, from plain stealing to arson, rape, and murder. Lack of space forbids that I even classify the fiendishness—from the midnight burning of towns, driving the unprotected women and girls into the streets crowded with unrestrained soldiery, to slipping the quid of tobacco into the pitiful jug of sorghum, which the mother, everything else destroyed, has saved from her blazing home and held desperately to as the last bar between her little brood and actual starvation; the spattering of the little tot with blood as the calf was shot in her arms, she having hugged it tight to save it from the fate of horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and poultry shot down and left to rot around the house.

Decency bars me from more than hinting at the wanton and studied befoulment of precious heirlooms and sacred things before applying the torch, and all the insults and outrages that helpless woman has to endure from brutal man when the clock is set back to primeval savagery. It is all-sufficing to say that as a rule they did their level best to match with their own black deeds their leader's black words. It would take a pen with the three-league sweep of Kipling's artist's brush in the here-

after to do justice to the breadth and depth of it all—and then no mind could comprehend it all and retain its saneness.

Sherman apologists (I never heard of his having a defender) have cited the liberal terms he offered Johnston and his remonstrance with the Northern politicians as to their treatment of the South after the war as showing that he was not all black. As to the terms offered Johnston, I would say that that was all a matter of policy in which motives of humanity might and might not have had a part. As to the other, judging the man by his deeds and knowing his animus towards the politicians, I am forced to suspect that his motives were akin to those that prompted Macaulay's Puritan to condemn bear-baiting—not that it gave pain to the bear but that it gave pleasure to man. Or was it, rather, that like the hyena, having mangled his helpless prey, he was jealous of the jackal pack?

That Lincoln was an able man, of many amiable qualities, is wholly beside the point. The colossal public crimes of history were committed by men altogether amiable, or estimable, or both, in private life. Julius Cæsar, the destroyer of ancient liberty, was the most genial and companionable of men. Charles the First, who but for the headsman might have destroyed modern liberty, was a tender-hearted, lovable gentleman of stainless private life, as was Robespierre, who glutted the very guillotine with innocent blood. Who could out-cajole Napoleon or Louis the Fourteenth, arch enemies of mankind, or, as to that, Satan himself? Did it brighten the lot of the shell-torn inmates of Southern hospitals to know that the maker of medical and surgical supplies, contraband of war, was a man of infinite jest? Were the skeletons rotting in the vermin-encrusted burrows of Andersonville, or freezing in the icy sheds of Point Lookout and Fort Delaware, helped by knowing that the breaker of the cartel could not abide the sight of misery? Did it lessen the sorrow of Southern mothers, who, roof-trees ablaze, fled with their little broods to the wintry woods and swamps, to know that the hand that swayed the besom of hell always rested tenderly on the head of his own children? Did it minish the agony of Southern maidens, writhing in the clutches of Sherman's licentious soldiery, to remember that the one at the head of it all was a virtuous man?

Lincoln, the public man—the only Lincoln that we knew—was the creature of the Republican Party—the party born of anti-Southernism, anti-Jeffersonism, the innate and truceless foe of individual, local liberty, as opposed to centralism, imperialism.

Did Lincoln ever rise a hair's breadth above his party? Is there a single instance in which he failed to see with its eyes, act with its spirit? When, during the opening, progress, or close of the war, did he display that greatness of mind or of heart, that magnanimity, that should wrest homage from even a vanquished and ruined foe? When or where was he other than the incarnation of Republicanism?

Shall we honor him for the dexterity, not to say duplicity, with which

the Peace Commissioners, the able men whom the South sent to Washington in March, 1861, in a strenuous endeavor to avert war, were kept dangling, while in violence to solemn promise the secret expedition was prepared and despatched to reinforce Sumter, a measure so close akin to perfidy that it alarmed and enraged the South and precipitated war?

It has been a platitude of history that the war was inevitable. Like most platitudes, it has very little thought back of it. In exact proportion as we disentangle the skein of past diplomacy and past politics, in the same degree do we discern that few if any wars were inevitable. In public in no less than in private life the soft answer turneth away wrath. At one touch of a frank, honest, sympathetic hand the most sinister political kaleidoscopes in history have instantly assumed benign combinations.

But that is all by the way. The wisest men of that day did not think war inevitable. Men North and South were working hard for peace. Lincoln's words and actions made only for war. How different was Washington's action in Shay's rebellion! Not waiting for overtures, he took the initiative and appointed a commission to confer with the malecontents, and thus averted bloodshed.

Shall we honor Lincoln for his emancipation proclamation? The blackest crime laid at the door of George III. was that he unleashed a handful of savages against our frontiers. Lincoln, as far as in him lay, unleashed four million savages (which the North held that slavery had converted the negro into) in our very midst, against our defenseless women and children. To the good feelings existing between the races we chiefly owe that the horrors of St. Domingo, multiplied ten thousand-fold, were not repeated at the South.

Shall we honor him for the flagrant breach of the cartel, and the resulting hells—Point Lookout, Fort Delaware, Johnson Island, Camp Morton, Camp Chase, Rock Island, at the north; Andersonville, Belle Isle, Salisbury at the south, and many more prisons in each Republic?

Shall we honor him for out-Kaisering the Kaiser in making medical and surgical supplies contraband of war, thus adding still lower depths to those hells, as to the whole war, on the Southern side?

Shall we honor him for Sherman's Gargantuan orgy of crime in Georgia and South Carolina, and for the vile dregs of it that our own women had to drain long after the hostilities ceased?

Lincoln's tragic taking off naturally caused a great revulsion of feeling in his favor at the South. This has prompted us to believe that had he lived the Republican lion would have transfigured itself into a lamb the moment that

"The war drums ceased from throbbing
And the battle flags were furled."

In other words, that mildness and benignancy quite angelic would have marked the reconstruction period, or rather there would have been no

reconstruction period at all, but, instead, a kind of family reunion, with Sewards, Ben Wade, and Thad Stevens *et id* as ecstatic ushers.

But from what act of Lincoln's do we find justification for this belief, or rather hope? There were good words enow. For, statesman as he was, Lincoln was first, last, and always the politician, seeking the public will before the public weal. Not by words, but deeds, must a man be judged. Words are the politician's stock in trade. "Deeds proclaim the man"; words too often hide him. It is true that when Richmond fell he authorized the calling together of the Virginia Legislature. But it was avowedly because he believed that it would recall the Virginia troops from Lee's retreating army, and he wished to give opportunity to do so. The moment that Lee surrendered he withdrew the permit, and ordered the arrest of any members who disobeyed the order to quit Richmond promptly.

It is far more likely than otherwise that Lincoln's death lightened the heel that sought to grind us in the mire. The incarnation of Republicanism in war, there is not a shadow of reason for believing that in peace he could have thwarted the politicians of their prey, though he would no doubt have deprecated their violence.

Why, pray, should he who shut his eyes while 18,000 square miles of Southern homes were being Shermanized, converted into a hell more vast and hideous than even Milton's imagination ever winged, all under plea of military necessity, have been less pliant when, a little later, political necessity called? Are Southern institutions more sacred than Southern women? Does the South set a greater value upon her political welfare than on the lives of her children, the honor of her women?

The Republican politicians were bent upon the utter humiliation and degradation of the South; upon forcing on her civil rights miscegenation, mongrelism. Their animus is shown by the clash with Andy Johnson, the fierce fight against even the stint of justice that a renegade would fain have accorded the land of his birth. So fraught was their attitude to the South with malice prepense that they in a measure overreached themselves, and brought about a partial reaction of feeling among the Northern people at large. Then the scrimpage with Johnson distracted their attention. He got many a blow that would otherwise have fallen on our defenseless head. Under Lincoln, their methods would almost surely have been less violent, but probably far more systematic and insidious. Davis might not have been imprisoned, or not so long, or Wirz, the commandant of Andersonville prison, executed. But in all likelihood a more furtive, deadly way would have been found to work our undoing. When thieves fall out honest men thrive, and that is about the only chance they do get to thrive.

The man to whom is really due the gratitude of the South is Grant. Had he not scotched the plan of the Republicans to punish the Southern military leaders, by threatening to throw up his commission if Lee was

arrested, there is no telling, the gates of vengeance once ajar, when they would ever have closed.

Turning from Lincoln the Republican to Lincoln the man. Is the wily, not to say tricky, politician, the reveler in "smutty" jokes, the Southern ideal? Lack we, of our own kitch and kind, of our own household of faith, great men who were also great gentlemen? Are we so poor in heroes that we must need pedestal the man who led his sections somewhat bunglingly, it is true, but without ruth or remorse in the onslaught that virtually destroyed ours?

Again, is there anything in the achievement of Lincoln so dazzling that it should blind us to everything else? Is there glory for the strong in overcoming the weak, the many the few? Would we ever have heard of Goliath, Xerxes, Darius, and all their like, had they won? Such immortality that they won is reflected from the foes they faced, weaker but of better mettle.

In years to come the case of the South and the North will be cited as the crowning instance of the tyranny of the pen. The American colonies, equal sisters, finding themselves aggrieved by certain unmotherly measures of the mother country, a mother too far off to harm them greatly, and in fact harming only their pocket, and that slightly, yet made war on her, the author of their being, beat her and set up for themselves, calling high heaven to witness, that "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Now, some malign power had laid upon all, or about all, of these sister colonies a great burden, a great curse (negro slavery), disguised as a blessing, but upon part of them more heavily than others. The sisters lightly afflicted were able to free themselves of this curse not only without scath, but with actual profit, by shifting their portion of it upon those sisters sorely afflicted to helplessness.

Then straightway the free sisters, seeing how trammelled and helpless the burdened sisters were, not only robbed their pockets by iniquitous tariff laws which bore heaviest on one section, but, what was infinitely worse, they turned their quacks (the abolitionists) loose on them with their nostrums, defeating all the practical efforts of the burdened sisters to cure themselves. Finally, forced thereto by the instinct of self-preservation, the first law of nature, the burdened sisters, now expanded into a domain larger than the whole at the beginning, and three times as populous, took steps to save themselves, to be rid of the persecuting sisters. But these steps were far more deliberate, more orderly, and far more conciliatory than those taken with the mother country at the Revolution.

With all solemnity, observing every form of law and diplomacy, they declared their independence by withdrawing from the Union, as the persecuting sisters had, under infinitely less provocation, repeatedly threatened to do; and, when driven to the wall, turned and defended this "inalienable right," that "Governments derive their just powers

from the consent of the governed," with a courage and devotion that never has been surpassed.

That their appeal to the sword should have been lost is no wonder. The sword has ever been the slave of might.

But that a people who so long withstood the sword of the North should have surrendered so quickly, so cravenly, to its pen, must forever stand the wonder of the world. It will be incredible that an intelligent, high-spirited people, a people showing in every other respect mental and moral fiber of the most robust order, should have been transfigured into such groveling thralls that they not only forswore the high, expressive, and honorable name of the struggle given to their fathers, "The War for Southern Independence," but came to see only wild political folly, madness, in the sane and heroic endeavors of the fathers to establish and maintain a republic suited to the genius of the Southern people, one in which issues the most portentous that ever faced any people could have been settled by these people themselves and not by the arbitrary and hostile power of an alien people, or rather left unsettled, and in such a posture that, like Banquo's ghost, it would never down.

The compromise name, "War Between the States," which our perhaps overcautious leaders thought best to use while the South still had her head in the lion's mouth, was, as they must have known, a clear misnomer. But a misnomer, a wrong name, they doubtless held, was better than a bad one, better than the name rebellion with all its load of opprobrium and reproach.

Nevertheless, whatever the war was, it was not war between the States. The States, as States, took no part in it, were not even known in it. It was a war between two thoroughly organized governments and for one great principle, that completely overshadowed all others—Southern Independence. To the Northern mind the struggle of the South to reassert the cardinal principle of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, was rebellion; to the Southern mind it was not.

To every patriotic Southerner, War for Southern Independence should be a sacred name. It is the name hallowed by the lips of the men who died to make it a reality.

To all of us, from Jeff. Davis and Zeb. Vance down to the smallest "shaver" who waved his home-made straw hat to a frazzle as the soldier trains rolled by, it was the "War for Southern Independence"; never a war between the States. To the thousands who died that the name might live, who breathed out their gallant lives amid the smoke and dead-fallen air of battle, or who, braver still, starving in Northern prisons, surrendered to the fell Sergeant Death rather than to the wiles of the captor who offered the renegade everything, it was always, everywhere, the War for Southern Independence. They never believed they were dying in a mere squabble between States, but to achieve Southern Independence;

to erect a great Southern Republic, under whose golden ægis Southern civilization would flower into the glory and envy of the whole world.

It is treason, rank treason, to their memory for us to dub it otherwise.

“WHAT IS HISTORY BUT A LIE AGREED UPON?”—NAPOLEON.

In the first edition of the foregoing part of this brochure I endeavored to reach the Southern people through my usual channel, the Southern press. To my very great astonishment I found it closed to me. Editors who for nearly forty years had met me more than half way for copy (my pen, since as a young man I gave up a remunerative career as a magazine writer, has been devoted to the defense of the ideals and aspirations of the Old South) now slammed the door in my face. Thus was I driven to appeal to Cæsar, to appeal in pamphlet form from the Southern press to the Southern people.

Their response has been most cordial, showing that whatever the Southern press may be, the Southern people themselves are patriotic. But men and women pass; the printed word endures. What the papers are today the people must be tomorrow or the day after.

“But for Lincoln’s influence you might not here and now dare to write as freely as you do” is the gist of some of the editorial criticism my paper has met, though it was a layman who expressed it in those words.

I submit that it is high time that the patriotic men and women of this generation register a most emphatic protest against the attitude of a part of the press and people before it is too late.

Did we need just what we got in the sixties, and ought we to be shouting glad we got it?

Shades of the Fathers! We, of the purest strain of the stock that gave freedom to the world; we, from whose very loins sprang the architect, the builder and the defender of American liberty—we, so poor in statecraft, so bankrupt in morality, that an alien must needs come with three million at his back, and with fire, sword, and rapine save us from ourselves! Yet such is the logical, the inescapable deduction from the premises our children will be taught to accept!

The North, flinging to us the dross of physical prowess and purblind devotion to a fallacious cause, has arrogated to herself the gold of moral rectitude and political infallibility. We have been taught, and are tamely accepting the dictum that the South, when she lost hold on the motherly apron strings, when she foolishly ventured from under the ægis of Northern protection, relapsed swiftly towards despotism and anarchy, and that Appomattox alone saved us from political disintegration!

Is this true? Do we alone deserve the odium of being the one branch of the race too weak to frame civil institutions that could stand the crucible of war? The Romans, the sanest and most practical political

people the world has ever seen, always when the ship of state was in peril, put a dictator at the helm.

"Inter Arma Leges Silent."

In the clash of arms, law was silent, suspended. Private right, private wrong, had to wait until the foe was vanquished and Rome safe.

Rome, when beset the hardest, never faced the disadvantages, and was rarely ever in the extremity that the Confederacy stood from beginning to end. Never in any land was there direr need that a hand, strong, arbitrary, untrammelled by peace-built law and usage, garnering every man, every resource, should strike as one at the Giant Foe.

Yet was there a dictatorship at the South, or any semblance of one? Did war submerge law? It is a maxim of our race, Free speech, free press, free land. Tyranny ever chains first the tongue, strikes her first blow at the palladium of liberty—free utterance.

Right here in North Carolina the Confederate Government had its fullest swing. The State lay nearer to Richmond (and distance, owing to crude transportation facilities, was a far more formidable thing then than now) than any other State as largely free from invasion. It affords a fair instance of the contact of the Confederate Government with the civil life of the people.

Now, living evidence is still abundant that no man was molested for opinion's sake or for word spoken. That the press remained unmuzzled, the files of the *Raleigh Standard*, which to the very end preached stark treason to the Confederacy, stands in everlasting evidence.

Governor Vance of North Carolina and Governor Brown of Georgia, though patriotic men, seeing fit, even in extremity, to place State rights and other considerations before Confederate success, hampered the Confederate executive to a degree never before or since tolerated under such circumstances. It is true that the impressment and conscription measures were grievous burdens, especially here in such close reach; but they were laws of the Congress, and not the fiat of the executive. In short, much of the defensive power of the South was lost by the failure of President Davis to wield the full measure of power that would readily have been acquiesced in by the people at large. Never, not even in the great crises, did Jefferson Davis exercise one-tenth the dominance over the Confederate Congress that Woodrow Wilson now does over the Federal. Davis's decrease of popularity towards the end came from no abuse of power on his part, but mainly from the stigma which the world attaches to failure—that is, except in case of the soldier. Around him war flings a saving halo.

Let us glance at the other side of the picture—at the status of the civilian of the North. The Federal Government, infinitely superior in resources, had not the same urgent need for unity. Yet we find its actions immeasurably more arbitrary than those of the Confederate Government. Not under the old regime in France were *lettres de cachet* as plentiful or more potent. It was a well-known boast of Stanton, Sec-

retary of War, that he could touch a bell on his table and order the instant arrest of any man in the Union. Fort McHenry at Baltimore, Fort LaFayette at New York, Fort Warren in Boston Harbor, and the old Capitol Prison at Washington, became veritable bastiles, crammed with political prisoners, men immured for what they had said or for what it was suspected they might say or do. In the old Capitol Prison, at least, executions were frequent.

Never imposed Fate a heavier burden on any people than on the South when she was made the ladder on which the benighted African must climb civilization and Christianity. Not the opprobrium, but the profound sympathy of the whole world, and especially of the Negro himself, is our just due; for never, since time began, has a race climbed from darkness to light so swiftly and at so small a price to itself—at such fearful cost to the instrument of its elevation.

As is well known, slavery was no Southern indigene; no plant that grew here only. It was only the inheritance of the ages. Sanctioned by immemorial and universal usage, and even by Holy Writ itself, it was indeed the very oldest of all human institutions. Founded originally, in part at least, upon morality, upon the pity which spared instead of slaying the captive, it thus became the bedrock of all civilization. But slavery in this land, and at that date, was a thing strangely out of place and out of time. So much so, indeed, that one wonders as to Fate's motive in the misplacement. Did a spirit of impish irony impel her, or was she actuated by a deeper motive, when she dropped this Old World stray, this foundling in the cradle of liberty, the New World—the motive that as we

“Broadened with the act of Freedom ”

we should also

“Grow strong beneath the weight of duty”?

Slavery would surely have gone, even had Lincoln never been born. The drift of the world had set against it, deep and resistless. Harking back two thousand years to Epictetus, it had come to see that not to him who getteth, but to him who doeth a wrong, cometh the chief harm. Emancipation was inevitable, and to hold that the Southern people, the purest-blooded branch of the sane and virile Anglo-Saxon race, the race which gave liberty to the world, and which in all lands and under all conditions had stood for justice and fair play, as it came to see it—for us to hold that this, our branch, would have been so degenerate, so recreant to the genius and spirit of the stock, so inferior to its forbears, or even to the “lesser breeds” to the south of us that did put it by, that it lacked the manhood to free itself from the incubus of slavery, is a worse slander than even our foes would dare put upon us.

It is argued, and by our own writers as well as others, that the slaveholding class dominated the South, and that self-interest, cupidity, would

always have impelled this class to block emancipation. I would reply that slavery in divers forms was long an institution with our race; but that the race in its progress put it by, despite the strenuous opposition of the slave-holding class—as it must have done in this case. The whole moral trend of the race rendered any other course impossible. The fact that medieval serf was white and strong, and the modern slave black and weak, would undoubtedly have made the work of emancipation harder; but the race is morally stronger now than then.

There is one fact generally overlooked, which would have added greatly to the practicability of emancipation. That was the fact that the slave-holding classes at the South were in a minority of about six to one. Every reform, social or political, that our race has achieved has been in the face of a wealthy minority far stronger than that. In fact, it is almost a truism of our politics that the people, as opposed to aristocracy, always win in the long run. No civilization has survived in which this rule did not hold. The chief reason that the dust covers so many of the splendid civilizations of the past was because the great mass of the people remained inert to the end. The broadening of the franchise right here in North Carolina in the fifties, whereby the aristocratic dominance of the State Senate was abolished, is significant proof of what the middle-class manhood of that generation were capable of.

One thing is certain: Had the negro remained in our midst the South would have avoided the irretrievable error of the North in making the slave a citizen first and a man afterwards. As emancipation would have been gradual, so also would have been the elevation of the freedman. As he attained the full stature of manhood; so he must perforce have been invested with the rights and privileges of a man. But he hardly would have remained. Colonization being impracticable at that late period, segregation would probably have been the solution of the race problem. Even in this sanctimonious age we exclude the Asiatic. Where would have been the sin in settling the African in a prescribed area of the country, and excluding him from the other parts of it? Compared with the Yellow peril, the Black peril is Olympus to a wart.

Some degrees of wrong and injustice there might have been. Wrong and injustice are not often absent from the affairs of this world. But who is bold enough to assert that the measure of them could have equaled, or even distantly approached, that infinitude of injustice and of wrong—the orgy of political madness—reconstruction, whose blighting effect was to distract and stunt, perhaps forever, the development of the negro, and to sow, as far as the hand of malice could sow, the very salt of annihilation over the civilization and life of the South?

As is well known, the emancipation movement in its earlier, saner stages had its warmest and ablest supporters at the South. Washington, Jefferson, Henry, Madison, and the foremost men of that time sought earnestly for some practicable method of putting an end to slavery, which was generally regarded as a curse, and especially so to the

whites. But for the perfectly natural reaction caused by the rabid, incendiary methods of the abolitionists, which, beginning about 1830, flowered so quickly and hideously in the Nat Turner butchery of white women and children, gradual emancipation would soon have been under way, and would almost surely have ended slavery with that century. I would not deny that the development of cotton growing caused by the perfection of the cotton gin, and the resulting enormous increase in slave values, would have made emancipation a tremendous problem. But sphinxes—political, social, industrial, moral, religious, racial—had lined the pathway of our race down the ages. All had been answered, and, we believe, answered right, by the communities which had most at stake.

To our branch alone was denied the priceless boon of answering for themselves the most momentous problem of them all, a problem that involves not only our prosperity but our very existence, and which now can only deepen and darken with the passage of the centuries. Were our immediate forbears—the men whose courage and heroism in war placed the Lost Cause in fame's eternal keeping, whose fortitude and sagacity triumphed even over reconstruction, who hurled back the envenomed dart, negro suffrage, upon the heads that sent it—weaklings, men whose destiny was safer in the hands of an alien and hostile section than in their own? Perish thought so blasphemous!

How few of us, too, have ever analyzed the famous Emancipation Proclamation; have ever tried to ascertain the proportions of politics, diplomacy, and philanthropy couched therein; have ever regarded its true purport and bearings. Did it free, or seek to free, all the slaves in the land? Oh, no! Only a part. What part? Those in the hands of Lincoln's enemies. Those within the Union lines, those in the hands of friends, were not affected by the proclamation. They remained in bondage so far as this instrument was concerned. Lincoln had been dead nearly a year before total abolition was legally brought about. Outside of the punitive intent, the prime motive of the proclamation was, first, to buttress the Republican Party against the rising tide of Democracy; second, the Union arms against those of the Confederacy. The military end sought was to weaken his enemies by destroying their property. Naturally, he struck at their chief asset—their slaves. If he had been able thereby to destroy any or all of other kinds of their property he would have done so. If his simple mandate would have cut the throat of every work animal, milch cow, fire every roof-tree, and imperiled the honor of every woman in the South, there is no reason to believe that he would have withheld its utterance; for it was his word that sent hundreds of thousands through the South to do these very things.

If we must accept subjugation, even of mind and of spirit; if we must view the whole bloody drama through the eyes of our enemies; if we must believe that the blow came from above and not below; that we not only richly deserved but sadly needed just what we got—then the

right men to honor are the pioneer abolitionists, Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith, and men of that feather. They boldly stood for abolition, when to stand meant hatred, contempt, and imminent peril of life and limb. These men had no ulterior motives. They breasted the tide of fortune. Lincoln floated upon it. If honor we must the sowers of the wind whose fearful whirlwind we had to reap, let's honor these, the real heroes of the cataclysm. True, they sent John Brown pikes to butcher us with; but they were perfectly willing to be butchered themselves in the same cause.

No one would deny that Lincoln was an enemy of slavery. He was a product of a class and of an environment that drew in hatred of slavery and of slave-holders with every breath. Moreover, most thinking people, North and South, were enemies of slavery in theory. With Lincoln and the North it was only a theory. With the South it was a fact, a grim fact which, foisted upon us by English and later by Northern greed, time had now riveted upon us. The growth was cancerous. But would you go to your butcher to remove even a cancer?

Emancipation at the time, and in the manner in which Lincoln sought to enforce it, was a politico-military measure, and nothing else. 1862 was election year. Lincoln, great man and statesman as he undoubtedly was, was also politician to the core. And when did your politician, big or little, ever fail to trim his sails to the wind—to save the party and then let the party save everything else? Federal arms had sustained such repeated and disastrous defeats that Northern opinion was turning to the Democratic Party, which favored peace. Defeat stared Republicanism in the face. Something must be done to stem the tide. The emancipation proclamation was the answer. While primarily a political move, great things were also expected of it in a military way. It was largely believed that the slaves would rise and deal with Southern women in a way that would cause the Southern armies to crumble in a day, as each man rushed home to save his own.

As a military measure it was the fiasco of the ages. Not a slave stirred or lifted hand. But its political effect was immense. It instantly brought into the Republican camp every cohort of abolitionism, and held all in line to the end, though these lines bent fearfully under Jackson's blows at Chancellorsville, and again, when soon after the grey columns surged northward to Gettysburg, and even when, much later still, Grant's army recoiled in temporary paralysis from the futile assaults on Lee in the Wilderness.

Still, this is not an attack on Lincoln, nor do I seek to revive sectionalism, further than consistency and self-respect demand. I am well aware that patriotism is a matter of geography. That all depends upon the side of the line on which you were born. But so, also, is renegadeism. High moral law demands that we be true to our fellows, our surroundings. The Washingtons and Lees obeyed it. The Arnolds and Iscariots defied it. This is simply an earnest protest against accepting as a

Southern hero, a Southern exemplar, a man, no matter how worthy personally, who was a leader of Northernism, and of Northernism in its attitude of implacable hostility to the South and Southern ideals. It is natural that the Negro should honor Lincoln. He gave the Negro freedom. And the North, he gave the North dominion over the South. He carried out Northern ideals of centralism, imperialism. The Southern ideal, State rights, home rule, the palladium the world over of the weak, met destruction at his hands. With glaring inconsistency, we still hold the ideal to be true, while paying homage to the chief instrument of its destruction.

"Suppose the South had won? What then?" is the common query, usually in tones of utter deprecation. I would reply that had the South lost; what then? The blackest page in the annals of our race! Would the Lees, the Davises, the Hamptons, the Vances, the Grahams, the Ashes, the Grimeses, the Clarks, the Jarvises, the Hills, the Carrs, the Ransoms, the Averys, have been less fit to deal with even the tremendous issues left by war than the Sowards, the Wades, the Stevenses, the Holdens, the Tourgees, the Deweeses, the Cuffees, who fumbled them till, with an effort that paralyzed all other endeavors for a generation, we wrenched the helm from their hand.

The War of 1861, notwithstanding the unfortunate slavery complication, was as much a war of liberty as that of 1775, or that of 1642 in the Mother country. It was a struggle for local self-government against centralism and all the evils that have skulked in its shadow, monopoly, trusts, extortion in its protean guises. A quicker exploitation of our resources—and a quicker destruction—has undoubtedly ensued. But where has the wealth gone? Would not those resources be safer in the hands of nature than in the hands that now hold and use them as a lever to oppress and extort?

The war, waged for State rights, for local self-government, the principle for which the flower of our manhood laid down their lives, was the half-conscious effort of our branch of the race—the branch that events have proven to have had the keenest political instincts of all—to avert this torrent of evils; some then plainly disclosed to our clear vision, some even now just emerging from the haze of the days to be.

Then circumstances and heredity had made the South the citadel of conservatism. What a brake on the wild wheels of this mad world her conservatism must have been could it only have won the prestige of success, had it only been its luck to be backed by the stronger battalions of heavier guns! In all human probability it would have saved us from many of the evils above indicated, as well as the maze of fads, follies, and isms in which we now grope in such utter bewilderment.

Even Southern writers have to stultify themselves every time they approach the subject as to what might have been if the victory had been accorded to us instead of our foes.

Loud in praise of the statesmanship of the old South, strong in the

belief of the justice of her cause; yet no sooner do they reach the point where the stronger battalions of the North prevail than they drop on their knees and thank Heaven for having saved the South from herself. They thank Providence that instead of giving the South a respite from Northern incendiarism, instead of smoothing her way so that she might put by slavery in the least harmful manner, it brought down upon her three millions of armed men, who, destroying the flower of her manhood, breaking the heart of her womanhood, consigning her children to poverty and ignorance, reducing her people to virtual beggars, and would have forced miscegenation, mongrelism, upon her but for the mettle of her stock! Others may think as they will, but I cannot bring myself to hold any such slanderous opinions of Providence. I cannot see the hand of Providence (though I might a sootier one) in such fell work as, on the one hand suffering Northern abolition, incendiarism, to arouse and inflame the resentment of the South, and, on the other hand, Northern ingenuity to invent the cotton gin, thus at the critical moment infinitely increasing the value of slaves, and forestalling the South in her earnest endeavors to put an end to slavery. That the South was denied the inestimable privilege of abolishing this curse which the cruel hand of Fate had fastened upon her, thus saving herself the unspeakable loss and woe and humiliation that the war entailed, is no proof that the Southern way was the wrong way. Success is no proof of right, nor failure of wrong. Yet men whose very religion is founded on faith in One who from the low viewpoint of material things sounded the abysmal depths of failure, now cry aloud that it is. The vessel of iron will ever smash the one of gold against which in the rough mischances of the world it is thrown, though the latter, from the fineness of its material and the nobleness of its design, might be fit to edify mankind forever.

O. W. BLACKNALL.

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(In regard to race and segregation, I would add that the question was extensively discussed at the North in the early part of the war, and Florida suggested as the State to be thus utilized when the South should be subjugated. This being considered too small, Texas was proposed.)

